Air pollution in major cities

336. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Air pollution goes to the heart", as reported in the 'Times of India', dated the 17th June, 2002;

(b) if so, whether, according to the World Bank Study, nearly forty thousand people die every year in India in some big cities only, due to air pollution;

(c) if so, whether the CPCB has since undertaken any concrete plans to check air pollution in major cities of the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, there is no conclusive data available to confirm mortality attributable to air pollution.

(c) and (d) The major steps taken by the Government as well as CPCB to control air pollution are mentioned below:

(i) A comprehensive Policy for Abatement of Pollution which lays stress on the preventive and control aspects of pollution has been evolved.

(ii) Emission standards for on-road vehicles and mass emission standards for new vehicles have been notified under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and are enforced by the various Transport Departments of the State Governments including Delhi.

(iii) Unleaded petrol is supplied in the entire country from 1.2.2000 and diesel with 0.25% sulphur maximum content is supplied from 1.1.2000 in the entire country. Ultra low sulphur (0.05%) fuel has also been introduced in major cities.

(iv) Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is supplied to automobiles through a number of retail outlets in Delhi and Mumbai to cater to the CNG vehicles.

(v) Benzene content in petrol has been reduced.

(vi) A network of 295 Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations has been set up throughout the country.

(vii) Emission standards for industries have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to check pollution.

(viii) Steps have been taken to control pollution from 17 categories of highly polluting industries.

(ix) Industries are also required to provide necessary pollution control measures before commissioning of their plants.

(x) Industries are required to take consent from the respective State Pollution Control Board under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for discharging their effluent and hazardous waste.

(xi) Environmental Action Plans for 24 critically polluted areas have been prepared and taken up for implementation.

Monitoring Committee for Forest Conservation Works

†337. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a Central Empowerment Committee, to monitor the forest conservation works;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In compliance with the Supreme Court's Order dated 9.5.2002, a Central Empowered Committee has been constituted on 3.6.2002, to monitor the implementation of the Court's Orders and to place before it, the non-compliance cases including those relating to encroachment removals, implementation of working plans, compensatory afforestation, plantations and other conservation issues.

(c) Does not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.